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O 301003Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6723  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9618  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3233  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 001772

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/RSP, PM/PPA, S/CT, EAP/RSP, AND EAP/MTS  
USPACOM ALSO FOR JIATF-WEST, FPA HUSO, AND J5  
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP (TOOLAN/REDMON)  
JOINT STAFF/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [ETTC](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: U.S. LEADS TRILATERAL PORT SECURITY PROJECT

REF: MANILA 00380

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Manila is leading a trilateral counterterrorism initiative to improve port security in the southern Philippines. Together with our Japanese and Australian partners, we conducted a security needs assessment of the Davao City and General Santos City ports, and identified a number of significant gaps in security. This inter-agency, multinational effort will noticeably advance counterterrorism goals in the Philippines. The port security project is part of an evolving process in which the trilateral partners will deepen coordination and explore future areas for more extensive counter-terrorism cooperation. Embassy Manila will continue to drive the trilateral initiative forward here. End summary.

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Trilateral Partners Tackle Port Security  
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¶2. (SBU) Embassy Manila is leading a trilateral counter-terrorism initiative with our Australian and Japanese partners aimed at improving security in key but vulnerable ports of Mindanao island in the southern Philippines. Embassies organized and led a trilateral needs assessment survey of General Santos City and Davao City ports, which could eventually serve as models for further trilateral cooperation in other Philippine ports, including Cotabato City and Zamboanga City. As an Australian trilateral team member noted, our common objective is to deprive smugglers and terrorists the use of legitimate ports, gradually pushing them "on to the beaches," and to give Philippine authorities the tools and ability more effectively to halt the flow of illicit traffic and individuals into their country.

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First Step: Needs Assessment  
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¶3. (U) The May 7-10 assessment of Davao and General Santos included U.S., Japanese, and Australian maritime security experts from several agencies. In addition to inspecting the current port facilities, the team met with Philippine Coast Guard, National Police, Ports Authority, Bureau of Customs, and other relevant officials.

¶4. (SBU) The assessment team discovered fundamental gaps in

security common to both ports; inadequate inter-agency communications capability; an inability to conduct seaside patrols; lack of sufficient cargo inspections; dilapidated fencing around the port facilities; poor lighting of the port areas; and a lack of closed circuit television capability. The Australians are completing a trilateral assessment report for the CT Ambassadors in time for the Trilateral Counterterrorism Consultations in Sydney the week of June 4th.

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Comment  
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15. (SBU) Our trilateral partners also see the port security project as only the first step in an evolving process in which we will work together on an increasingly collaborative basis. We have agreed to compile a comprehensive list of U.S., Japanese, and Australian maritime security-related projects in the Philippines and to hold quarterly inter-embassy working group meetings in order to avoid duplication and to facilitate programmatic compatibility. The trilateral port security project clearly demonstrates a joint U.S., Australian, and Japanese commitment to work together more extensively to achieve common maritime security objectives, as well as broader counter-terrorism goals in the Philippines. Embassy Manila will continue to play a leading role in advancing this initiative here.

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